

This is an official

DHEC Health Advisory

Distributed via the South Carolina Health Alert Network
2 Dec 05 1:00 pm

South Carolina DHEC Warns Public of Potential for Skin Damage Caused by Temporary “Black Henna” Tattoos

Advisory Summary

- Black Henna paint on tattoos may cause severe skin reactions
- Health Care Providers should report skin reactions associated with Black Henna "tattoos" to DHEC.

Background Information

Recently DHEC was notified of two pre-teen boys who had experienced severe and widespread skin rashes requiring medical treatment and, in one case, hospitalization, after receiving “black henna” temporary tattoos while visiting North Myrtle Beach in August.

Henna, a coloring made from a plant, is approved for use as a hair dye only and not for direct application to the skin, according to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Furthermore, some henna tattoos that are being marketed in the US contain a product called p-phenylenediamine (PPD). A petroleum derivative, this dye can be added to the paste used in temporary tattoos to produce a darker shaded image known as a “black henna tattoo”. When applied to the skin, this ingredient may cause allergic reactions in some individuals, such as intense itching, redness of the skin, swelling and permanent hypo pigmentation or scarring at the tattoo site. These are referred to as “temporary tattoos” because the dye is not injected into the skin.

DHEC Recommendations Regarding Potential Risk

Hoping to prevent additional cases of skin-damaging reactions to black henna tattoos, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) is advising South Carolina businesses, residents, and visitors of their risks. The practice of using black henna for paint on tattoos has been documented in coastal resort communities in South Carolina and in surrounding states.

DHEC’s warning is further substantiated by an import alert issued by the FDA for several foreign-made temporary tattoos that contain unapproved color additives. This alert is currently being enforced at ports of entry throughout the United States.

All cosmetics, including skin-staining products that are sold in the retail market must have their ingredients listed on the label, based upon guidelines under the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act.

South Carolinians and visitors to South Carolina are urged to consider potential risks before having any type of tattoo applied to their skin. Persons who experience any adverse skin reactions to a tattoo should seek immediate medical attention. Incidents should be reported to the local DHEC office to assist state officials in investigating problems from tattoos and identifying risk to the public.

This alert is not associated with “decals” type tattoos that are applied to the skin with a moistened cotton ball. This type of tattoo fades several days after application.

Sources for Additional Information

- Additional information on tattoos may be obtained at the FDA's website and searching under "temporary tattoos."
 - www.fda.gov
 - Consumers can also contact FDA's Office of Cosmetics and Colors at 1-202-401-9725.
- General Information regarding the use of henna in tattoos practices can be found at the following website. **Disclaimer: This site is provided for general information and is not endorsed by DHEC regarding content.**
 - www.hennapage.com

DHEC Contact Information for Reportable Diseases and Reporting Requirements

Incidents of adverse skin reactions to a tattoo should be reported to the local DHEC office. This is consistent with South Carolina Law requiring the reporting of diseases and conditions to your state or local public health department. (State Law # 44-29-10 and Regulation # 61-20) as per the DHEC 2004 List of Reportable Conditions available at:
http://www.scdhec.gov/health/disease/docs/reportable_conditions.pdf

Federal HIPAA legislation allows disclosure of protected health information, without consent of the individual, to public health authorities to collect and receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease. (HIPAA 45 CFR §164.512).

Public Health Offices		
Call reports to the Epidemiology/Disease Report Office in the appropriate county listed below.		
<u>Region 1</u> (Anderson, Oconee) Phone: (864) 231-1966 Nights / Weekends: 1-(866)-298-4442 (Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Saluda) Phone: 1-888-218-5475 Nights / Weekends: 1-800-420-1915 <u>Region 2</u> (Cherokee, Spartanburg, Union) Phone: (864) 596-2227 ext. 210 Nights / Weekends: (864) 809-3825 (Greenville, Pickens) Phone: (864) 282-4139 Nights / Weekends: (864) 460-5355 or 1-800-993-1186	<u>Region 3</u> (Chester, Lancaster, York) Phone: (803) 286-9948 Nights / Weekends: 1-(866)-867-3886 or 1-(888)-739-0748 (Fairfield, Lexington, Newberry, Richland) Phone: (803) 576-2749 Nights / Weekends: (803) 304-4252 <u>Region 4</u> (Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, Sumter) Phone: (803) 773-5511 Nights / Weekends: 1-(877)-831-4647 (Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marlboro, Marion) Florence, SC 29506 Phone: (843) 661-4830 Nights / Weekends: (843) 660-8145 <u>Region 5</u> (Aiken, Allendale, Barnwell) Phone: (803) 642-1618 Nights / Weekends: (803) 827-8668 or 1-800-614-1519	<u>Region 5 (cont.)</u> (Bamberg, Calhoun, Orangeburg) Phone: (803) 533-7199 Nights / Weekends: (803) 954-8513 <u>Region 6</u> (Georgetown, Horry, Williamsburg) Phone: (843) 365-3126 Nights / Weekends: (843) 381-6710 <u>Region 7</u> (Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester) Phone: 843-746-3806 Nights / Weekends: (843) 219-8470 <u>Region 8</u> (Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, Jasper) Phone: (843) 525-7603 Nights / Weekends: 1-800-614-4698 <u>Bureau of Disease Control</u> Acute Disease Epidemiology Division Phone: (803) 898-0861 Nights / Weekends: 1-888-847-0902

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.